PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

READ BY

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(Kapurthala State)

Mr. President, Sisters and Brothers.

I thank almighty God for the opportunity offered to us for coming together. For the honour you have done to me today, I feel no end of gratitude to you. The day I received the call from the Executives of the College to preside over this annual Function, I felt no small amount of hesitation to accept the invitation, conscious as I was, of my short-comings. But I could not refuse because of the urgency of the call from the community. I consider myself very fortunate in having been afforded the opportunity to meet some of the more distinguished members of the Community on this auspicious occasion. I feel that I could not have had the pleasure of meeting so many of you otherwise. Consequently with expressions of heart-felt gratitude for the great privilege granted to me, I request you to put your heads to -gether for the betterment of the Community and in view of the emergency of the times to rise to your full stature and power, for the up-lift of those who belong to us.

I cannot refrain from dwelling over the atrocities perpetrated on our people and the tragic times that they have had to pass through due to the partition of the country and the coming into existence of a fanatically communal state like Pakistan. It goes without saying that the cyclone of communal fury which was primarily the result of the two-nation theory promulgated by the protoganists of Pakistan, over took our people in the North West and engulfed them in a sea of misery and resulted in the displacement of large numbers of us and in the bereavement of those who were near and dear to us. Economic distress and the sudden change in fortunes resulted in untold privations. Even men like S.B S. Charanjit Singh fell victims to communal fanaticism, without whom there appears to be a void in the Community. We had heard of the change of Governments, the rise and fall of empires, but the enforced exchange of population on so vast a scale had never been read about nor witnessed before

Those who suffered calamity in this up heaval, my heart goes out to them in all sympathy and fellow feeling and I know that you also feel the same way. I feel that our attention should in the first instance be diverted to and absorbed in almost its entirety in the task of helping those who have been uprooted and ruined, to put them on their legs and covert them into useful members of the Society. Even though the Central and Provincial Governments are doing all that is humanly possible to ameliorate the lot of afflicted refugees, still a lot remains to be done and the helping hand that we can lend in this matter will not go amiss. In fact we who have remained immune from the calamities which befell our brethren in the North West, owe a duty to them in this matter. It is up to us to set up Committees every where, in towns and villages which would give refugees help, material and moral and assist them to get their due from Governmental institutions.

India, our mother land attained freedom after a century of enslavement. We should not forget that freedom has come to us because of the innumerable sacrifices of those who fought the battle of freedom through the decades and suffered all privations, even death in the cause of their mother land's freedom. We must also bear in minds that the freedom which we won with so much sacrifices should be maintained at all costs, and towards this end we should not grudge confidence to our leaders and all support to them in building up a future worthy of our great mother land. It cannot be gain-said that the future of a country depends on her industrial out-put which is the key-stone of the nation's economic structure. Since industrial advancement is primarily a matter of scientific research, we should not lose sight of the fact that the industry of the country depends mainly if not entirely on your efforts. We should therefore act in such a manner as to be of utmost use to the nation and for this purpose we should contact the Minister for Industries and place before him the ways and means of improving the country's industries which incidentally would also mean the

improvement of our own status. There was a time when men lived in caves and did not even possess the bare necessities of life. We can, however, look back with pride to the history of our community which brought about better standards of living to mankind by inventing and manufacturing all that goes to contribute to the comfort of human living. The history of human civilization is in fact a history of our community. It was our fore-bears who produced tools for the manufacture of looms which wove cloth for wear. In the dim past when the ancestors of the English, the Germans and Americans were going about naked and had not yet come out of the primitive stage, India had attained a stage of civilization where aeroplanes were plying. All this glory of the mother land was directly traceable to the achievements of our progenitors. The temples in Delhi, Som Nath, Ramashwaram and old carvings in the Ajanta and Ellora caves are a few among the many eloquent and lasting memorials to the scientific art of our ancestors More than ten thousand years ago, in the days of Rigveda, our country was known as sapat Sindhu. Many tribes lived there, like Dev, Danav, Nag, Nad. Among them was a tribe known as Pani which was highly esteemed. It was these people who took to maritime ventures and went to the Persian Gulf and colonized certain areas there. In Massopotamia they built the city of Ur. They also colonized Egypt, and were later on known as Symarians. Their migration from one place to another was the result of paucity of timber. These people went so far as Syria and Lebanon and founded an Empire there which was later known as the Phoencian Empire. This shows that it was our ancestors w ho first built ships and sailed them across the seas. Mining was also one of their side activities and it was they, who first dig gold and other precious metals. These people worshipped the rising sun and called him Baldev. Nomenclature of cities, countries and areas commencing with Bal can be traced to them. The wheel tracks of their vehicles were 4ft. 8 inches apart and this is

now the standard for wheel tracks of motor cars made by Ford and Chevrolet. The astounding thing today remains that the carpenter in the Punjab even today builds a cart to the track of 4ft. 8 inches. Some Two thousand five hundred years ago, Alexander the Great, invaded the Punjab and marched to the Sutlej in a career of conquest. With him came historians like Megasthenes and others. Magisthenes has made mention of the artisans of India and their art in his book "Ancient India" where he said, "The 4th class in the Social scale of India is the artisan class. Some of whom prepared arms while others prepared agricultural and other implements. This class of people are not only exempted from taxation but are also given stipends. At page 90 of this book the following occurs, "if any person disables a person by cutting off his hands or blinding his eye, the punishment for him is death". At page 92 he says, "He who incapacitates an artisan by cutting his hands or injuring his eye is awarded capital punishment. For heinous crimes the penalty is of cutting off his hair, because this latter punishment entails the greatest degradation". At page 30 we find, "Because of the abundance of food stuffs, the inhabitants of this place are tall and beautiful and of comely appearance and also because they breathe pure air and drink pure water".

After this for a long time we were disunited and dis-organized with the result that we lost our prestige, craftsmanship and art. Our high status in Society and the respect we commanded left us and we feel as it were from the highest pinnacle of the Himalayas to the lowest depths of the ocean. For this humiliation and degradation we find two causes :—

1. The first was the fact that the Great Masters of the past kept their secrets to themselves and did not impart them to others.

2. The 2nd was that being illiterate and un-educated, their knowledge could not be put down in black and white and thus perished with them

It is a regrettable fact that though books on spiritualism were written in large numbers, no learned person tried to commit to writing the knowledge of artisans of those days. After many centuries, members of the Community recently woke to the need of social and technical up-lift ; came together in meetings and conferences and set up institutions, one of which is the place where we have gathered today. This institution was founded in 1929 as a Primary school and then passed from stage to stage until it became a college in 1946. We have to pay tribute to the work done by S. Mohan Singh of Haddiabad in rendering material and moral aid and doing every thing in his power to bring the institution to its present stage of prosperity and advancement. It is to him mainly that the creation, fosterage and advancement of this College is due. Humbler people who contributed their mite and worked in collaboration with S. Mohan Singh in this great task also did highly commendable work. Our community is fortunate in having been provided with an institution of this type, where young men can receive education and rise to the height of their moral statures. More literacy without proficiency in small industries is useless and now that we have in this institution a place where education is imparted upto the degree standard, we should think out ways and means of going further forward There are about half a dozen institutions already affiliated to this college. The community's welfare would be better served if all the remaining institutions are also affiliated thereto.

Education contributes to the moral and intellectual advancement of mankind and it has been rightly said that the educated man receives more homage than the moneyed one. Want of education is a certain clog on advancement and leads to poverty and indigence. America and other countries have attained to their present heights only through education. But we as a Community turned over back on education and not only we are not getting it but also deride those who get it.

Instead of pen and ink we give our children play-things with the result that we become the laughing-stock of the world. Those professions in the nature of Engineering and Handicraft which we consider to be our hereditory professions have now passed into the hands of others Those who once did not know even the names of our tools are today Engineers and Industrialists. It is said that he who finds his path at the end of the day should not be said to have gone astray. It is a matter of complacence that about two dozens of institutions are trying to impart education to our children. We should proclaim it in every village and city that the times call for the education of the rising generation and that no child of the community should be without it. In fact we should study the inclinations of the children and direct their knowledge into channels more suited to them so that the future of the community may be a glorious one. Since long we are engaged in literary persuits only and this will have to be done for some time yet to come.

The educational system of the present day makes us good clerks but does not enable us to become good mechanics. The great need of the time is that technical education be imparted. This should be our goal, the goal for which we are fitted by heredity. No country can advance industrially without money and without industry no country's economic future can be bright. Past experience has taught us that boys can do either of these two things, i.e. acquire literacy and literary education or become mechanics. Both things cannot go hand in hand. The rules of the University stand in the way of doing so. It will not now do to only call certain institutions after technical names, but the problem must be tackled in a direct and forward manner.

We have to set up a Central Board for the purposes of establishing a purely Technical College for the Ramgarhias which should be worked on a very large scale and have a very large workshop attached to it, as also a factory with the latest machinery and the most upto

date laboratory, where students from the middle classes upto the degree be admitted and given various kinds and ways of technical education. Every boy should be given some sort of training first and then after ascertaining his leanings he should be provided with an opportunity to become an expert in the line to which he takes most naturally. e.g.

1. Middle class boys be trained in Drawing, Pattern Making, Foundry, Smithy, Turning, Fitting, etc.

2. Matriculates for Electricity, Telegraphy, Wireless, Radios and Television.

3. F. Sc. and B. Sc. to be trained for degrees in Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Mining and alike trades.

Before embarking on this venture I suggest that a committee of expert technicians be formed who should be asked to report on the probable expenses of the institution This report may be considered and work commenced there after. If we do not march with the times now, we will be left behind with nothing but regret.

Since our country is primarily an agricultural country and also because a very large majority of men live in villages, we must give proper attention to the production of agricultural implements of the latest type. I think, therefore, that we should make a start with middle passed boys. This we can do at moderate cost. To these youngsters we should teach the manufacture of agricultural implements, machinery, Chaff-cutters, Plough, Sugarcane crushers, heavy-load Vehicles, new types of Spinning wheels, Looms and other things of daily use By doing this we will not only be giving a fillip to cottage industry but we will also be materially helping those of us who live in villages.

Even now some of us are running factories which can be categorised into three classes :—

(a) Oil Engine, Mechanical, Hosiery Machine Manufacture, Iron Re-rolling, Chaff-cutter, etc,, etc.

(b) Cycle, Sewing machines, Motor spare parts, etc.

(c) Other Metal work, such as Cutlery, Building Material, Steel Trunks, Utencils, Locks, etc.

It is a matter of common knowledge that our people inspite of the fact that they spend money, time and labour do not get the worth of what they spend. Taking advantage of our ignorance of market conditions, middle men deprive us of the profits that should come to us. This shows that there is some thing wrong some where and we should try to get at the wrong things and set them right. It appears that the following are the main causes of this :—

(a) We have no firm, the output of whose manufacture could favourably compete with foreign products. This leads to deficit output with the result that we cannot engage highly paid and trained executives, i.e, why our manufactured goods are unable to oust foreign manufacture.

(b) Having very small capital we cannot mass-produce things and store them, with the result that without an eye to market fluctuations we try to sell our goods as soon as they are produced. That also means loss to us.

(c) Because of educational deficiency we are unable to lay out big factories and run them on modern lines It is an open secret ,that during the pendency of the last Great War, Controls worked to the detriment of the ignorant producers. Educated and influential people were always able to obtain their requirements by obtaining quotas and otherwise through knowledge of markets. The question to be considered is how best can these defects be remedied. To me it appears that co-operative societies dealing in akin materials be set up in towns with a Central Board to control them. These societies should notify

all small producers to become members and they should supply them with raw material, take their finished goods and market them, it should be for them to standardise goods and to fix prices for finished goods and to supply them with necessary information and convey the instructions of the Central Board to them. The Central Board should help all affiliated societies, obtain raw material from Provincial and Central Governments, send young men abroad for advanced studies, create separate departments for the various industries and translate and publish books in the Punjabi language on Engineering and technical subjects of all sorts Should this come about, we will soon be on the road to success. India having become free, a National Government is in the saddle. They are trying to create better standards of living and otherwise to ameliorate the lot of the masses. They should know that just as mechanical and inventive skill of the highest order is required for the production of the latest types of destructive machinery and arms in War, similarly in times of peace also such skill has to be mobilised for the service of industry. It is a craftsman that caters to the needs of the highest as well as lowest. The Government should therefore help men of our community so that we may raise the standard of manufacture in our conntry. We still have a number of inventors, most of whom are shrouded in the mist of oblivion. The artisan should have the same privileges in the Free India of today that he enjoyed in Ancient India, reference to which has been made earlier. The Government can help the craftsmen in the following ways :—

(a) Loans should be advanced to manufacturers to enable them to expand their existing business on a much larger scale.

(b) The Government should recruit the members of the Community in larger numbers in various technical departments of the Government.

(c) In order to help cottage industry, artisans in villages and towns should be allowed to purchase lands, unhampered.

(d) The Alienation of Lands Act in the Punjab has out-grown its utility and should be scrapped.

(e) Young men of the Community should be sent abroad for advanced studies at Government expense. Every citizen of free India should have the same rights as another and the old legacy of the British rule i.e. the policy of Divide and Rule. should be abandoned. Caste should not be officially recognised and disparity between the high and the low and the agriculturists and the non-agriculturists should also be dispensed with. The East Punjab Government is trying to set up colleges of various denominations. It would be in the fitness of things for the Government to help this institution and broaden and expand its instructional activities in technical and educational spheres by giving substantial aid to it. It is needless for me to reiterate that this institution and its affiliated institutions are being run by private endeavour alone and have not so far been the receipients of any assistance from official sources This institution is imparting education in arts & literature upto the M.A. standard and has also classes running for other technical subjects. If S Mohan Singh can be persuaded to donate some more land to the College, an agricultural class can also be incorporated there in and by doing so, S. Mohan Singh would be earning more gratitude from the generations to come. It is learnt that upto date machinery has been installed on his farms Should he agree to donate a little more of his land, we would have gone 2/3rds of the way to the establishment of a Ramgarhia University

New India is to us the end of old slavery, intellectual, physical and social Every citizen of hers should be free to express his views in the manner he likes best. To all Governmental elections the right of voting is to be given to all adults and it has therefore become imperative that every citizen of India should receive civic education We should learn to exercise the precious right, i.e. the right of vote, and for this purpose we should have a Central Body which will teach us the right way of casting the vote. It would be to our great welfare if the whole community votes as a block and supports proper candidates nominated by the Central Organization In this lies our salvation.